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ABSTRACT

In a method of decentering used in a freshman composition course, collaborative workshopping is employed, beginning with the first meeting, pairing students with semester-long colleagues. Students critique each other's writing at the second class meeting. Differentiating this approach from others is a pedagogy that sees collaboration and workshopping not as activities collateral to the experience of learning how to improve as a writer, but as the sites where most of the learning occurs in a decentered classroom. Paired students team-teach grammar to a class and collaboratively write, present, and defend a model essay to their peers. The essays are critiqued in the public classroom setting and, in the final exam, each team's essay is evaluated by another team. Throughout the semester, collaborative workshop activity serves in an integral way to decenter the teacher and to empower the students. Being decentered is more of a practical, than theoretical, concern. In the decentered classroom, an instructor can be a static authority, a responsible dispenser of what is to be learned. (A syllabus and examples of student essays are appended. (CR)

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ED 397 427

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T Lee
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Paper presented at the 1996 Annual 4C's Convention (Milwaukee)

Decentering the Freshman Composition Classroom: An Overview with Secondary Materials that Illustrate Student Success within the Classroom

In my freshman composition course, I employ collaborative workshopping, beginning with the first meeting. I pair students with semester-long colleagues on the first day; students critique one another's writing at the second class meeting. What differentiates my approach from others', perhaps, is a pedagogy that sees collaboration and workshopping not as activities collateral to the experience of learning how to improve as a writer, but as the sites where most of the learning occurs in a decentered classroom. The student teams are active and committed. These pairs team teach grammar to a class and collaboratively write, present, and defend" what I call a model essay" to their peers. The essay is critiqued thoroughly in the public"

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classroom setting. The final examination, too, is a collaboration between a team's two members in which they thoroughly evaluate colored photocopies of another team's final prepared essays. Since they will have to spend over fifty percent of class time actively editing one another's writing, they tend to do very well on this exam," which is noisy, and, to a casual observer, seemingly disorganized. But, like the class itself, the final is a decentered, but highly focused collaborative experience. Throughout the semester, collaborative workshop activity serves in an integral way to decenter the teacher and to empower students.

My assumptions about a teacher's decentered role--especially in freshman composition--are, perhaps, radical. The root meaning of the word pedagogue," pedagogos, has to do not with a master, a teacher, at the center of a classroom, but with a servant . . . or slave . . . who walked his or her young master to school. On the first day of my composition classes, I assume that students are already sophisticated writers, and I begin the first few weeks of the course by learning how they write, by learning the strategies that they use. At the same time, I assume that students need to take responsibility for their learning. I have built most of the syllabus around strategies for students to take responsibility.

I assume, too, that students like taking responsibility. Student teams are proud of themselves after giving a ten-minute lesson on dangling modifiers, and they take ownership for part of the class. I assume that, with the instructor as an active guide, student collaborators learn productively. As committed colleagues, students on the two-person teams learn one another's strengths and weaknesses. The instructor, in the role of guide, accomplishes a great deal of work behind the scenes in planning a carefully orchestrated syllabus and on the scene as a facilitator and resourceful, experienced writer.

Finally, but not least importantly, I assume that the more that students want to read the material they write about, the more interested they will be in the class and their writing. Our text, the Sunday New York Times, interests and challenges students. They enjoy the ritual of picking it ucontext, of paragraphs that need more details and analysis. It's a place where students do a lot of risk-free writing--frequent 250-word, in-class essays. It's a place where students read and comment on their colleague's work before I do. Before I comment on the writing, I first ask the colleague peer editor about the strengths and weaknesses of the essay. By the middle of the semester, students are expert critics of one another's writing. (This is shown in the final examinations I give: each student

team receives a colored-paper photocopy of another team's two final essays. Guided by a list of leading questions, the team critiques the essays, wholistically as well as in great detail. See attached material.) It's a place where I collaborate with my students.

Being decentered is more of a practical, than theoretical, concern. Though I am interested in discursive practices that reinscribe writers as subjects of their culture's ideologies, I focus on practical collaborative techniques that work in the freshman composition classroom. In the centered classroom," an instructor can be a static authority who is responsible dispenser of what is to be learned. The instructor's relationship with students is perhaps dialogic, at best, and unilateral, at worst. Studentcontext, of paragraphs that need more details and analysis. It's a place where students do a lot of risk-free writing--frequent 250-word, in-class essays. It's a place where students read and comment on their colleague's work before I do. Before I comment on the writing, I first ask the colleague peer editor about the strengths and weaknesses of the essay. By the middle of the semester, students are expert critics of one another's writing. (This is shown in the final examinations I give: each student team receives a colored-paper photocopy of another team's two final essays. Guided by a list of leading

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Being decentered is more of a practical, than theoretical, concern. Though I am interested in discursive practices that reinscribe writers as subjects of their culture's ideologies, I focus on practical collaborative techniques that work in the freshman composition classroom. In the centered classroom," an instructor can be a static authority who is responsible dispenser of what is to be learned. The instructor's relationship with students is perhaps dialogic, at best, and unilateral, at worst. Students can easily be passive and reactive. This relationship can work--a student can learn <u>despite</u> the teacher. But the student-teacher relationship can breakdown when students do not take responsibility for their own learning. In my experience, the breakdown likes to occur at the midterm freshman composition conferences. A student writer will say, I'm doing all that you ask of me, even revisions, and my grade is still a lousy . . . C." The student displaces his or her responsibility for learning, and for earning a grade, onto the instructor. Good writing, after that moment, became something that I was not supplying to the student, perhaps. To be fair, a student complaint at the midterm conference oftentimes is legitimate and on target. When I

decentered my composition pedagogy, more students began asking me during midterm conferences for help focusing a thesis. With the centered" pedagogy I had used before, far too many students asked, What is a thesis?"

My solution to midterm breakdown, then, involves foregrounding student responsibility and deprivileging, as far as possible, the authority of the teacher. Instead of a private, two-way relation with student writers, which I still develop in my comments on their papers, I now develop a largely public, three-way relation in which peer colleagues enter as the second voice, and I enter as the third voice in a very collaborative writing process.

(hand out syllabus and secondary materials: discuss)

English 111 Spring Dr. T.O. Lee Office Hours: M,T,Th,F - _____. & by appt.

English 111

Composition & Literature

Your Colleague: _____

Phone: _____

What Is This Course About?

In this class, you will read twelve issues of the Sunday *New York Times*. You will write six of your own essays, but with collaborative help from a student colleague. A great deal of our time will be spent writing and evaluating in-class essays. My aim is to build analytical skills in reading and writing by facilitating active collaboration in and out of the classroom.

In the "real world," you will find that collaboration is oftentimes routinely required. Even when it is not, knowing how to seek help and to collaborate may someday be useful.

You are not in this alone, then. You and a student colleague will collaborate throughout the course. Together, you and your colleague will teach one lesson in grammar or technical control and lead a class in pre-writing exercises. Your team teaching and essays will be evaluated as your individual work, though you will have collaborated with your colleague in all of your work.

Sixty percent of your course grade is based on your essays, all of which will be the products of collaboration with your colleague.

You also will collaborate with me, of course. I will help you with revisions of your rough drafts, after you have thoroughly discussed and revised the essay with your colleague. You also must present your lesson plans to me during a conference before you team-teach your class.

This course is planned to challenge and to expand your critical thinking and writing skills. What will make it successful is your active participation.

You will write six polished essays that **analyze and synthesize** issues raised in the *Times*. All must be typed and proofread. *I return sloppy work ungraded.*

Furthermore, you must *complete satisfactorily all six essays to receive credit for the course.*

Revision is central to the process of writing. Your grade will reflect how effecuvely you revise your work, which is to be **polished and well-wrought**.

What Is Collaboration?

Collaboration is active editorial and interpretative coaching, of the kind offered by a high school or college teacher. Help your colleague look up or rethink a problem and learn from his or her mistake. Refrain from merely repairing errors, for instance. Critically discuss news stories and drafts of your essays. Tag grammatical and technical control problems and problems with clarity in one another's work. Check paragraphs for unity, and so on.

You will actively collaborate in class when you team-teach your class, lead a class in pre-writing excercises, write essays, and evaluate your colleague's writing.

Out of class, actively collaborate with your colleague in discussion of and writing about stories.

Your and Your Colleague

Each team teaches one twenty-minute lesson in grammar and technical control, and gives one quiz (first five weeks).

Team-teach one full class, leading a class in pre-writing exercises (last nine weeks).

Each team will collaborate on at least some of the in-class writing.

Teams collaborate on one another's rough drafts, polished drafts, and revised drafts.

For the final exam, you and your colleague will collaborate in class on writing a thorough and thoughtful evaluation of another individual's or team's last essay(s).

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Policies

§ I notify the Dean of the College when you miss four classes. I keep attendance. Legitimate absences can be excused.

§ You must satisfactorily complete *all* assigned work to receive a passing course grade. If you cannot complete any part of the work, you may ask for an incomplete. If you do not complete any part of the work, and if you do not receive an incomplete, your course grade will be "F."

Requirements

Midterm Exam **10%**
Includes: An exam drawn from the material student teams taught in the first five weeks.

Presentation of a collaborative Model Essay & pre-writing **10 %**

Co-Teaching A Class in Grammar / Technical Control **10%**

Final Exam **10%**
Includes: a formal, written evaluation of another team's final essays. Timed and written in class.

Six Essays (3 pp. or more)
60%
*These essays will be products of much discussion and revision **before** they are submitted. Essays may **not** be revised for credit after they are graded.*

RESEARCH ESSAY
*One essay must include **research** of at least four other* Times *articles published prior to March 30, 1994.*

Texts

The Sunday *New York Times*

The Little, Brown Handbook

Writing Practice in Class

Deadlines for *Polished* Essays

The bulk of our work will consist of reading the *Times*, writing every day about the articles and commentaries in the *Times*, and writing and revising rough drafts of the six polished essays.

In most classes, I will give you a focused topic, drawn from the day's reading, and have you write succinct summaries of it, some of which you will hand in.

Deadlines for Essays:

Feb 17	April 7
March 3	April 19
March 17	May 6

Co-Teaching a Class in Grammar / Technical Control

1. Introduce your subject.
2. Announce page numbers and have the class open their books.
3. Give a BRIEF overview of the subject, highlighting the text's discussion. DO NOT READ FROM THE BOOK. *Summarize* the text's discussion, in your own words, with your own examples.
4. Ask for questions.
5. Bring to class ten sentences with problems covered in your lesson. Make up these sentences on your own, or with your colleague. Call on students around the room to find the problems and to give the answers.
6. Summarize your lesson. Offer any *insights* you may have into your subject, e.g., tips on how to avoid sentence fragments, split infinitives, and so on.
7. Ask for questions.
8. Give your ten-question, short-answer quiz. Try giving eight easy questions and two more challenging ones.

(Grade the quizzes at home and return them to me. *As you grade, make clear and legible corrections of any errors.*)
Overall, be enthusiastic and knowledgeable. If the text does not answer all of your own questions, discuss them with me or consult another source.

Criteria for Evaluation

Both Team Members Will Be Evaluated

Illustrates Lesson Clearly

Develops a Clear Lesson Plan

Knowledgeable & Complete

Makes Points Clearly

Develops a Useful Quiz

Reports & Assignment Schedule

Assignments: First Five Weeks

2/1 Introduction
2/3 In-class practice
2/4 In-class practice

2/7 In-class writing
2/8 Evaluating writing
2/10 Team-teaching
2/11 Subject : cs/fs (282)
Team (1): _____

Subject : num (468)
quotes (427)
Team (2): _____

2/14 Subject: mm/dm (307)
Team (3): _____
2/15 In-class writing
2/17 **Essay #1** due. (3 pp. or more)
Tentative date for Library Orientation with Mr. Kraeuter
2/18 Subject: agr (246) & semi-colon (408)
Team (4): _____

Subject: passive voice (242)
Team (5): _____

2/21 In-class writing
2/22 In-class writing
2/24 In-class writing
2/25 Subject: comma (381) & apostrophe (419)
Team (6): _____

Subject: parallelism (343)
Team (7): _____

2/28 In-class writing
3/1 In-class writing
3/3 **Essay #2** due (3pp. or more)
3/4 Subject : choosing words (476) "A" Appropriate Words and "B" Exact Words
Team (8): _____

Subject: choosing words (494) "C" Writing Concisely
Team (9): _____

Assignments: Last EightWeeks

3/7 Team (1): _____
3/8 In-class writing
3/10 **MIDTERM EXAM**
Grammar & Technical Control
3/11 In-class writing

3/14 Team (2):_____
3/15 In-class writing
3/17 **Essay #3** due
3/18 Team (3): _____

3/21-25 Spring Break

3/28 Team (4): _____
3/29 In-class writing
3/31 In-class writing
4/1 Team (5): _____

4/4 Team (6)
4/5 In-class writing
4/7 **Essay #4** due (3pp. or more)
4/8 In-class writing

4/11 Team (7): _____
4/12 In-class writing
4/14 In-class writing
4/15 In-class writing

4/18 Team (8): _____
4/19 In-class writing
4/21 **Essay #5** due (3pp. or more
4/22 In-class writing

4/25 Team (9): _____
4/26 In-class writing
4/28 In-class writing
4/29 In-class writing

5/2 In-class writing
5/3 In-class writing
5/5 In-class writing
5/6 **Essay #6** due (3pp. or more)

5/9-13 Finals Week
Final: Written in-class critique of another individual's or team's last essay(s).

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Collaborative Pedagogy in Freshman Composition

Terry Lee, Christopher Newport University (Va.)

WRITING workshop

Subject: 1) Use of In-class Writing & Guided Revision to Improve Student Writing
2) Use of Guided Peer Editing

Goals: 1) To use class time for collaborative "pre-writing" of exercises (to be revised) and for work to be graded (*i.e.*, rough drafts).
2) To foster skills for collaborative revision of exercises and of assigned writing, *before* it is graded.

Assumptions:
- That revision is a critical key to improvement.
- That learning to revise writing is not easy.
- That class time used to guide students in learning to revise is well spent.
- That guidance in revision produces results best when there is immediate feedback (workshop environment) and when revised work is read and commented upon.
- That writers do not so much *express* their meaning as *discover* it.

❑ In-Class Writing and Guided Revision

OVERVIEW. The following exercise, which takes two class periods, could be adapted to a variety of classroom settings in which an instructor wants students to think critically about a given problem or text—to analyze and synthesize.

Class #1

- **Students write a 20-minute, 250-word essay**
- **Immediately thereafter, students write a one-sentence précis of their essay.**

The instructor guides discussion of the text(s) and allows class time for student writing.

- **Students exchange essays with their colleagues and read critically, making comments. The instructor asks a few students to explain and to defend their critical reading.**

List on the board and explain a few salient qualities of good writing.

- **At home, instructor reads the essays and makes brief suggestions for improvement.**

Students revise their work at home and turn it in for another *quick* read by the instructor.

Class #2

- **Using the in-class writing exercise, the instructor selects two or three examples to photocopy and to scrutinize with the class OR types a list of the one-sentence précis for critical in-class analysis.**

Finding errors and finding ways to make improvements will take the whole period.

- **Students work overnight to revise their in-class "practice" essays, using strategies they've just learned, taking advantage of the brief hints the instructor made on the essay.**

DISCUSSION. An instructor who uses class time for writing and revision impresses students with his or her resolve that writing is important and that *revision* is the key to improvement. Instructors need not be writing experts; an instructor's active interest and involvement in student writing—of essays, reports, abstracts, problems, and so on, is an important key.

Attached are three student essays that Mark, Arthur, and Jane wrote in class and revised at home in the first week of a freshman composition course. The instructor quickly read the essays, giving very brief advice on how to revise them (e.g., *What's the point?*). Students who revised with some success did so because they brought to the class their own sophisticated strategies, because the instructor offered quick prescriptive advice, and because the instructor made the students' work an active centerpiece of class workshops.

Benefits:

a. Risk-free academic writing.

b. Continuing dialogue between students and instructor.

c. Analysis—of common text; of their *own* text.

d. Collaboration with one another, and instructor.

e. Instructor moves about class offering help; students may ask for help *during* the writing process (coaching).

f. Critical and evaluative dialogue among students as paragraphs and sentences are read and critiqued.

g. A non-threatening way to discuss grammatical / technical control problems—as they crop up in the critiqued work.

h. An awareness of writing's complexities AND of practical ways to address. them (*e.g.*,

Proverbs of Help

✔ACADEMIC WRITING always fails: there is always a "defeating comment."
✔RED INK is the "color of defeat" and a barrier to communication.
✔WRITING IS "RECURSIVE;" so is the teaching of writing.
✔MAKE A CONTRACT with student writers and keep it. Clearly state your goals & expectations.
✔SHARE YOUR OWN writing strategies with student writers.
✔REVISION IS NOT punishment but the release of "tension between what we want to say and what the discourse actually says."
✔PROGRESS IN SOLVING writing problems can be recursive, not linear.

Every Assignment Presents *Several* Options

WHEN FOCUS IS ON...	...THE PURPOSE IS...	... TO BE (KIND OF WRITING)
writer / addressee	express self or group	creative
reader / addressee	persuade	persuasive, argumentative
reality / context	explain the world	expository, scientific
message	create text in own right	imaginative, literature
contact	keeping line of comm. open	—
code	language used to discuss language	meta-language

Erika Lindemann's *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers* (1981) informs some ideas here, especially "Every assignment presents several options" and those cited in quotation marks.

Jane 2/5

shift

In The Ring Cycle, Renee Bacher mentions how her life compared to her friend's, was unmaterialistic, until they started getting engaged and received glamorous diamond engagement rings. She discusses how other objects that were seen as necessities by her friends, such as a car, were unimportant to her until the idea of an engagement ring set off some kind of spark.

passive voice

From the way she previously described herself, this obsession with a ring was something very new and complex. She now realized that the simple things that made her life happy would no longer suffice, and she needed to be like her friends, who all had marvelous rings to show off.

Bacher began to realize how she had become, but she remained to be torn between her simple lifestyle with the man she loved, and the diamond ring she longed to own.

Best articulation of Bacher's dilemma

Renee Bacher's, The Ring Cycle, discusses how certain temptations can envelope even the most unmaterialistic person.

Jane 2/11

In "The Ring Cycle," Renee Bacher explains her story of how materialistic objects were unimportant to her until her friends started getting engaged and were receiving large and extravagant engagement rings.

improved introductory statement

She discusses how her life was pretty easygoing and simple until the day she set eyes on her friend Abigail's giant, sparkling gem perched upon her left ring finger. Previously, the whole idea of being engaged to her fiancé Ed was something that she cherished without the need of an enormous ring. But now, this new, complex obsession with an engagement ring was surfacing, surprising Ed as well as herself.

...instead of "From the way she previously described herself"...

new analysis

The idea of an engagement ring being just a simple "lasting token of love" was no longer sufficing, and Bacher needed to be more like her friends, who were all receiving marvelous, enticing rings.

good expansion

Bacher was realizing that she was torn between her simple lifestyle with the man she loved and the diamond ring she was longing to own.

Renee Bacher's, "The Ring Cycle," explains how her obsession with a glamorous engagement ring was overpowering her engagement to Ed.

Sharp & incisive would make an excellent thesis statement

Revision

Revision shows real improvement, with the revised one-sentence précis doing a nice job of articulating the "Ring Cycle's" complexity.

A thorough revision in that Jane not only repairs smaller problems, but articulates an excellent focus, albeit at the very end, in the précis.

Renee Bacher was thrilled when her fiancé Ed asked her to marry him. She tells us that she is a non-materialistic person and didn't want an expensive engagement ring. It was not until she saw Abigail's ring that she wanted to get the most prettiest ring she could. Yet she seems to be missing the real value of an engagement ring. *She is only looking at the material value and not the long lasting value of it (a sign of Ed's love). In her article she shows very clearly how she looses her sense of value. Firstly, her friend Abigail had a wonderful engagement ring and Bacher felt she had to get one better than hers, just to out do her. "Life would not be complete without a ring like Abigail's." Secondly, when Ed asked her what kind of ring she wanted she couldn't make up her mind. "I liked a pear shaped stone, no a round one." "Well, I definately didn't go for marquise, but then again I did." When she couldn't make up her mind Ed stopped asking what she wanted. She then started to fight dirty. She would leave little messages around their apartment "something like this in a diamond might be nice." She also left magazine articles lying around and another time she left a jewelers card on Ed's night stand with a model number and a price on it. She really wanted to get everything out of Ed that she could. We eventually see a glimmer of hope in Bacher when she tells Ed that she really doesn't want a ring and that she only wants him. However, when Ed tells her that he already had a ring made up the only thing she wanted to know is when she was going to get it. She was also getting worried about how it would look. "What if it was too big or garish?" In conclusion what Bacher is trying to say is that people shouldn't become so infatuated with an engagement ring and forget the great man giving it to you saying I love you and I want to spend the rest of my life with you.

Introduction is more discursive and dilatory, but it's Arthur's style, and it works fine here.

... instead of "an example of this"...

...instead of "another ploy"...

dangling modifer syndrome

still contradictory

Clearer, but still struggling. Possible point: *although she is herself still caught up over the ring, the moral seems to be that ... blah, blah, blah*

Revision

Several substantial changes. The good supporting details in the first draft are improved. Focus is sharper and the organization is very good.

The thesis (*), though, seems to contradict the concluding sentence.

Bacher's point is that an engagement ring is supposed to be glamorous but, obviously [this woman (Bacher) in the article The Ring Cycle] did not see the true nature of the ring. She only saw it as a material possession which she could be proud of and also show off to her friends. An example of this is when her friend Abigail became engaged and when she saw Abigail's ring she felt she couldn't go on living without one. She also started telling her soon-to-be husband Ed that it should be very expensive and very big. It seems that she became to enamored with this ring that she almost forgot that she was getting married. Another ploy she tried to use on Ed was a very good one. She would cut out pictures from the newspaper and put them on the refrigerator for him to see. She would also cut out advertisements from magazines, strategically placing them around their apartment. She even went as far as putting a jeweler's business card on Ed's night table with price and model number of a certain ring. She really wanted to milk him for all he was worth. We eventually see a glimmer of hope when she tells Ed she doesn't want a ring and that she only wants him. However, when Ed tells her that he already had a ring made up she wanted to know when she would get it. In conclusion, what I think Bacher is trying to say here is that it's not the ring you are in love with, it is the man giving it to you saying I love you.

Bacher became so infatuated with getting a ring and forgot about the real value of an engagement ring.

faulty predication

not parallel

shift in development and organization. He has now decided that "this" was a *ploy*.

With his point becoming clearer, Arthur now makes an incisive generalization (that's good).

Was there cause for despair?

Typical of writing process: one begins to synthesize one's thoughts at the moment of closure.

Also, this is a definite statement, but not one that describes what the essay discusses. Bacher never suggests that "it's not the ring you are in love with." Arthur imports the sentiment.

First Draft

A DIFFICULT ESSAY TO ASSESS because Arthur writes purposively and analytically—and many of its statements are definite. Although we sense that it could be better, we are challenged when we think about what prescriptive advice to give to improve it!

HOW ARTHUR MIGHT STATE HIS POINT:

After several frustrated ploys to have her fiancé buy her a glamorous engagement ring, Bacher realizes that Ed's love is more important than a glamorous ring.

But Arthur did better than that on his own, improving the focus, organization, and development of his revised essay.

The only substantive advice given in marginal notes on the draft was this: *the essay tends to ramble, never quite coming to a definite point.*

Mark 2/5

I feel Bacher's main point is to show how some people can change over something as small as an engagement ring. This is evident when an engagement almost is ruined by the size of the ring. The size of the ring almost came between Renee and her boyfriend due to Renee's friends ring. After noticing a ring on her friend's finger, there was an instant change in attitude and a sign of competition. Competition in the way of seeing who had the bigger and more glamourous ring. To Renee, a large ring would show how much her boyfriend would really care for her. There was also a sign of jealousy towards her friend Abigail due to the size of her ring. Renee turned jealous and greedy but also she looked as if she cared more about a status symbol, such as a ring, rather than the man she would be marrying. In conclusion, I feel Renee proved the point that people do change over silly things like engagement rings and sometimes if you don't catch yourself fast enough, you'll lose the thing you love most.

does she catch herself?

logic?

The point of changing your ways over something as small as an engagement ring was caused by the jealousy and greed of Renee Bacher.

"This" refers back to "change," which is itself vague

redundant

sentence fragment

cut: redundant

close to making a definite point

not clear

First Draft

Overall: Coherent, in its own way. Redundant, wordy, & persistent awkwardness. Still, Mark has the right ingredients here, though they are diffused over the essay and there is virtually no detailed support. For example, the meaning of "some people can change" is hard to pin down.

Organization & Thesis rough:

- ring causes change
- competition for biggest ring
- large ring=more love
- jealousy over size of ring
- seems to care more for ring
- people change over "silly things"=imprecise: *misplaced priorities*
- if you don't catch yourself, you'll lose thing you most love (she loses Ed?)

How Mark might state his point:

Bacher shows how jealousy can change a non-materialist fiancée into a greedy [ring monger?].

Mark 2/11

Bacher's main point is to show how people can change they're personality over something as small as an engagement ring. This is evident when an engagement almost was in jeopardy over the size of an engagement ring. The size of the ring almost came between Renee and her boyfriend due to the jealousy and greed that Renee had for her friends ring. After noticing the ring on her friend's finger, there was an instant change in her attitude and also a sign of competition between them. To Renee, a large ring would show how much love her boyfriend actually had for her. There was also a sign of jealousy towards her friend, Abigail, due to the size of her ring. Renee turned jealous and greedy and cared more about a status symbol than she did for her boyfriend. This could have been a problem to they're marriage if it wasn't for a nice man who was taking the whole thing great. In conclusion, Renee proved the point that people do change over silly things like engagement rings and sometimes if you don't catch yourself fast enough, you'll lose the thing you love most.

Revision

Superficial changes
No real revision.

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Guided Peer Editing

Terry Lee, Christopher Newport University (Va.)

WRITING workshop

Novice peer editors need to be guided, step by step. While gaining mastery of technical and grammatical tools is important, learning to judge the *overall* success of an essay is the primary concern. Novices will read a 250-word essay quickly and write cursory comments, even though you ask for an extended critique. When asked if the essay succeeded and why, a novice will reply that the essay did a good job of making its point. There was good support. The instructor can easily complicate the novice's critical inquiry, however, simply by asking him or her to tell the class just what the essay's point is. Where, specifically, is the point stated?

When peer editors learn to read critically enough to articulate an essay's point—or to argue that it has no point—the instructor can focus on *how* the point is developed and *how* the essay is organized.

As peer editing sessions develop, the instructor should demonstrate ways to improve writing. By far the most effective tools for general revision of an essay that has found its point and organized and developed support around that point are editing out unnecessary words, combining sentences, and using subordinating conjunctions, which help in sentence combining and in sense making. Of course, disciplines other than English will have differing strategies and tools for revision.

In my composition class, I talk novice peer editors through the first few sessions, helping students who stare blankly into space, who cannot think of anything to write in a critique, who mistake peer editing for a social hour. I also put brief guidelines on the board, such as those below. I often focus peer editing sessions upon specific areas, especially wordiness and introductions.

What is the essay's point?

Read the essay through one time. Does it make a point?
Where is the best expression of the point?
Can you read through once and understand its point?
Do you have to stop to make connections or to puzzle out a sentence?

Is the point supported with key details, or evidence?

In an end-note, articulate the essay's strengths.
Give advice on how to improve a weakness you see in the essay. Be specific.

By the end of the semester, most composition students have become fairly sophisticated editors. They see more strengths and weaknesses in another writer's work than in their own, however, and they sometimes use a wrong term to describe a problem.

Attached is a "Model Essay" that was drafted and revised around the mid-term by a student team, Jessica & Brandy. They worked closely together on this project, as they had on all their work since the beginning of the semester. They selected their subject, an address by President Clinton. After Jessica & Brandy discussed with the class their pre-writing and revision, they read the essay. After student teams worked up detailed critiques of the Model Essay, the instructor guided discussion of Jessica & Brandy's work.

Attached is a very successful final essay by Chad, who began writing "D" work.
Also attached is a student-team's critique of Chad's essay (i.e., their final exam).

Analysis of Rough Draft

WRITING workshop

by Jessica & Brandy

Emotional Appeal

In "Clinton Delivers Emotional Appeal on Stopping Crime," Douglas Jehl summarizes President Clinton's speech that was given to a group of black ministers in Memphis, Tennessee.

This is a very nice initial revision of the rough draft. The writers *rough out* their thoughts, then analyze what they have on paper. This initial revision is the first attempt to unify the draft. In the polished draft, the writers continue to flesh out this new introductory paragraph.

Each year more than 37,000 Americans are killed by gunshot wounds and more than 160,000 fearful children stay home from school because of the violence there. These were just some of the examples given by President Clinton in his speech to a group of black ministers in the Temple Church of God in Christ on Sunday. By delivering his speech at God in Christ, Clinton intensifies the concerns of soaring crime and violence.... Clinton uses Martin Luther King Jr. in his address to get across to the people that they are abusing their freedom and that they must assume responsibility for the problems in the community. He does this by telling the people that Dr. King would feel betrayed because of all the violence taking place today. Clinton said that if Dr. King was alive today he might say: "I fought for freedom, but not for the freedom of people to kill each other with reckless abandonment." Also Clinton himself is moved by the recent news accounts of violence among young people. Clinton said, "I cannot longer justify going to bed at night thinking about these children killing other children...." He gave "vivid descriptions" of the violence occurring in the black communities. Clinton ends his appeal with the quote, "If you had told anybody who was here in the church on that night that we would abuse our freedom in that way they would have found it hard to believe. And I'll tell you its our moral duty." Clinton addressing the crime problem head on with the help of Dr. King feels that the public must do their moral duty to turn crime around.

This first sentence is moved to the bottom of the third paragraph in the polished draft-good move.

The seed of the second paragraph of the polished draft. This version is rough, but gives shape to the writers' thought. The polished version is much more sophisticated (see first and last sentences of paragraph in polished draft). The changes made here exemplify an effective strategy for revision.

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Analysis of Polished Draft

WRITING workshop

Emotional Appeal

Title: should be more descriptive

Good start: In revising, the rough draft, the writers added this analytical introductory sentence.

In "Clinton Delivers Emotional Appeal on Stopping Crime," Douglas Jehl summarizes President Clinton's speech that was given to a group of 5,000 black ministers and other black leaders in the Temple Church of God in Christ on November 13 in Memphis, Tennessee. Clinton asked the Church, a denomination of five million members from 30,000 churches around the country, "to make our people whole again."

But the intro. could have focused the point of the essay much more sharply by substituting the essay's last sentence for this one.

Although Clinton wants to decrease the crime and violence all over the U.S., he hopes that the ministers and leaders will help stop the crime and violence that has plagued the black communities more than any other." During President Clinton's address, he used Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as an example of a civil rights leader who would "feel a sense of betrayal" if he were to return to the church today. This church is the same church were Dr. King delivered his last sermon the night before he was assassinated. Clinton goes on by saying, "If King were alive today he might say, 'I fought to stop white people from being so filled with hate that they would wreak violence on black people. I did not fight for the right of black people to murder other black people with reckless abandonment." The President knows he could not have won the election last year without the support of blacks, but he is still "intent on urging black Americans to assume greater responsibility for the problems in their communities."

Dev: the essay stays on track, the vague thesis notwithstanding. This sentence also anticipates the second part of the writers' argument, which is set out in paragraph 3.

if he were to return to the church today... BECAUSE? *because* black people are murdering black people...?

The point is developed adequately, though "loosely."

Not only is President Clinton concerned with the violence among black people, but he is also CONCERNED WITH THE RECENT NEWS ACCOUNTS of violence among young people. Clinton said, "I can no longer justify going to bed at night thinking about these children killing other children." He grieves at the thought of more than 37,000 Americans being killed each year by gunshot wounds and that 160,000 children stay home from school because of violence there.

Terms are not parallel.

Not quite what the writers mean to say. The concern seems to be over *violence*, not news accounts of it.

Interesting quotation, but a reader might pause and wonder about whether the president has forsworn sleep.

Not parallel.

...Of 37,000 Americans dying from gunshot wounds

...of 160,000 children staying home

As crime and violence increases, the President emphasizes that these problems must be faced soon and hopes that the ministers and leaders will help him with half the battle. Clinton said it best when he said, "unless we do something about crime and violence that is ravaging our country, it will destroy us."

Loose. Say what you mean.

... The President wants Americans to help stop violent deaths and hopes ...

or

... not only must Americans face the reality of violent deaths, but the black clergy must take steps to prevent them...

Conclusion does a good job of closing, but the last sentence is the clearest statement of thesis in the essay.

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Douglas Jehl

In "Clinton Delivers Emotional Appeal on Stopping Crime," Douglas Jehl summarizes President Clinton's speech that was given to a group of black ministers in the Temple Church of God in Christ on Nov. 13 in Memphis, Tennessee.

should be in body

5,000 ministers and other black leaders

Each year more than 37,000 Americans are killed by gunshot wounds and more than 160,000 fearful children stay home from school because of the violence there. These were just some of the examples given by President Clinton in his speech to a group of black ~~pastors~~ ministers in the Temple Church of God in Christ on Sunday. By delivering his speech at God in Christ, Clinton intesifies the concerns of soaring crime and violence ~~because in 1968 martain luther king Jr. gave his last sermon (so) fierce the night before he was assaisenated.~~ Clinton uses martin luther king Jr in his address to get across to the people that they are abusing their freedom and that "they must assume responsibility for the ~~paplems~~ problems in the community." He does this by telling the people that Dr King would feel betrayed because of all the violence taking place today. Clinton said that if Dr. King was alive today he might say: "I fought for freedom, but not for the freedom of people to kill each other with reckless abandonment." Also Clinton himself is ~~tormented~~ pained by the recent news accounts of violence among young people. Clinton said. "I cannot longer justify going to bed at night thinking about these children killing

was it has why he has concerns

use in separate sent.

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Other children..." He gave "vivid descriptions" of the violence occuring in the black communities ~~troops for grab their attention~~. Clinton ends his appeal with the quote" If you had told anybody who was here in the church on that night that we would abuse our freedom in that way they would have found it hard to believe. And I'll tell you its our moral duty." Clinton ~~addressing the Crime problem~~ headon with the help of Dr. King, feels that the Public must ~~do their moral duty to turn Crime around.~~

need to reword conclusion

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Chad
English 111
Dr. Lee
5-5-94

Future Sketches of Richard Nixon

On April 23, 1994, Richard Milhous Nixon, the 37th president of the United States, died after suffering from a devastating stroke. The day following his death, American's and World leaders stressed Nixon's presidential achievements rather than his resignation from office. In the future, will people still emphasize Nixon's achievements, or will his resignation from office overshadow his overall accomplishments? Judging from all the coverage covered on his death in the Sunday April 23, 1994 edition of The New York Times, news investigators feel that there is no doubt in spite of all Nixon's accomplishments, the main focus of his career will always be the first president to resign from office.

Looking back on news articles that date back to the beginning of this decade, the media foreshadowed that Nixon was heading towards a revival and once again earning the respect as a foreign diplomat and former president. Throughout his presidency and up until his death, Nixon made many great triumphs. Many contemporary chroniclers agree that Nixon was a master at foreign policy. His most notable foreign policy triumph occurred in 1972 when he reopened relations with the People's Republic of China, which ended decades of silence between the United States and the second-largest Communist power (Herbers). That same year, suppressed fears of nuclear plunder

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of our nation were relieved when Nixon negotiated the first nuclear arms-control treaty with Moscow (Apple Jr.). Both nations agreed to give up some of their missile defenses. Several months before his death, Nixon renewed his diplomatic skills by traveling abroad and conversing with foreign dignitaries.

Ironically, his death came before his re-emergence of national recognition as an elder statesman. Although Nixon made many achievements media investigators deem that there is no doubt that his resignation from office will overshadow all of his great triumphs. Tom Wicker, in "An Indomitable Man, An Incurable Loneliness," strongly feels that Nixon will be characterized in historical sketches of the future as the first president forced to resign the nation's highest office. Wicker states that future sketches of Nixon will not include the events and accomplishments of his career that have earned near-mythical status. In the article, Wicker characterized Nixon as "a tough and ruthless competitor who seldom hesitated to cut corners or engage in questionable tactics, and many opponents never forgave what they regarded as his smears and trickery" (Wicker). Wicker believes that Nixon's corrupt actions and forced resignation from office will outshine his overall accomplishments. Similar to Wicker's view of Nixon, John

Herbers, ~~in the~~ article, "In Three Decades, Nixon Tasted Crisis and Defeat, Victory, Ruin and Revival," states that "Nixon never received the honors and accolades he would have earned had he not resigned the Presidency in the face of certain impeachment for the cover-up of a cheap political burglary of Democratic offices in the Watergate complex and other illegal acts of domestic espionage, all documented by Oval Office tape recordings" (Herbers). Because Nixon never received the honors for his achievements while he was alive, there is no doubt in Herbers's mind that he will never gain the recognition in the future for his accomplishments.

According to a conversation with newsman John Chancellor in 1988, Nixon stated "History will treat me fairly" (Larsen, p. 174). (No matter how much the media stressed his triumphs during his week long funeral review, closing remarks left little doubt in the viewers mind that Nixon will be remembered throughout history mainly for his negative accomplishment, the first president to resign from office.) FINALLY Clear STATE THESIS

Work Cited

Apple Jr., R.W. "About Nixon, Leaders Stress Triumphs, Not the Downfall." The New York Times 24 Apr. 1994: 1Y.

Herbers, John. "In Three Decades, Nixon Toasted Crisis and Defeat, Victory, Ruin and Revival." The New York Times 24 Apr. 1994: 13Y.

Larsen, Rebecca. Richard Nixon: Rise and Fall of a President New York: Franklin Watts, 1991.

Wicker, Tom. "An Indomitable Man, An Incurable Loneliness." The New York Times 24 Apr. 1994: E1.

Final Examination
English 111

Biz Harrison
Your Name CHAD SLOVICK

Whose essay are you critiquing? CHAD I

Directions:
Give a complete and competent critique of the essay(s) before you, commenting on the introduction(s), paragraphs, technical/grammatical control, and overall essay in the spaces provided.

1. The Introduction.

HE PRESENTS GOOD INFORMATION IN HIS OPENING PARAGRAPH. BUT WITH ALL THE INFORMATION GIVEN IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHAT THE THESIS IS. (IS IT ABOUT NIXON'S DEATH; HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS; OR THE NEWS MEDIA'S OPINION ON HIS RESIGNATION.)

SENTENCES START TO GET WORDY TOWARDS THE END OF THE PARAGRAPH IT COULD BE TIGHTER WITH WORDS OMITTED.

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2. Paragraph Development.

Majority of the paragraphs contain the same information that was stated on the first page (THAT NIXON HAD ACCOMPLISHMENTS(?) that will only be remembered As the first president to resign).
Paragraphs lacked NEW INFORMATION AND WHAT INFO THAT WAS GIVEN WAS REPETITIVE.
THE paper conveys the FEELING (to the READER) that he was "thinking Aloud" or making sense as he wrote.
The information given could be covered in fewer paragraphs, DUE TO LACK of NEW information and Repetitiveness.

3. Technical & Grammatical Control.

SOME OF THE SENTENCES COULD HAVE BEEN COMBINED. WITH THE LONGER SENTENCES HE SEEMED TO HAVE TENSE SHIFTS. DUE TO RAMBLING AND WORDINESS WORDS COULD BE OMITTED, THUS RESULTING IN "TIGHTER" SENTENCES. WORDS ARE REDITITIVE AND [redacted] VAGUE

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4. Write an end note.

1. Comment--about equally--both on the strengths and weaknesses of the essay(s).

2. Offer prescriptive advice on how the writer may improve his or her essay.

Be complete in your comments.
Illustrate your comments with details from the essay, if that will help make your commentary more understandable.

HE SEEMS TO KNOW WHAT HE WANTS TO TALK ABOUT BUT JUST DOESN'T SAY IT.

THE ~~SE~~ PARAGRAPHS GET WORDY AND THERE IS A LOT OF REPITITION THERE ARE POINTS IN THE PAPER WHERE YOU COULD OMIT WORDS OR SENTENCES. IT~~'~~S ~~IT~~ SEEMS THAT IN EACH PARAGRAPH YOU SAY THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER. SUCH AS HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND TRIUMPHS, BUT YOU NEVER STATE WHAT THEY ARE. I THINK YOU CAN ADD INFORMATION TO MAKE IT A STRONGER PAPER

MR. I CONVEYS THE MESSAGE THAT HE WANTS TO PRESENT INFORMATION ABOUT NIXON. But HE repeatedly USES VAGUE WORDS (TRIUMPHS, ACHIEVEMENTS, accomplishments, THUS NOT giving SUPPORT to his paragraphs. CHAD SEEMS TO ASSUME that the READER KNOWS NIXONS BACKground, therefore the INFO is NOT always clearly stated. With MORE INFORMATION this PAPER could be much stronger. Between the wordiness and repetitiveness LESS Good info, but ~~but~~ if MORE were Added, the PAPER would have a stronger impact. Unfortunately, the thesis or main idea is NOT stated until the Conclusion. With some Revision, More info, And Grammatical changes the paper could be improved.

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